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Mildromeda: Pantoum

by Martha Modena Vertreace-Doody

"A naked singularity was suspected at the center of the Milky Way."

Harper's Magazine

Grey shelf mushrooms girdle leafless cottonwoods
like crinolines I layered under my high school skirts
fanning from skinny legs. Bound in its halo,
the harvest moon keeps pre-dawn half lit

like unstarched crinolines under high school skirts
covered in leaves I should have raked ages ago.
The harvest moon keeps pre-dawn half lit.
Blood sport. The same moon — gold over silver —

covers leaves I should have raked ages ago.
The same cloud bank writes the name of tomorrow's storm.
Blood sport. The same moon gilds the lakefront.
Stalled in revolving doors, images in downtown suits.

The same cloud bank writes the name of tomorrow's storm
on paper cups, bagels in plastic bags.
Stalled in revolving doors, images in downtown suits
now lost in your six-letter word for *mass of stars, gas, dust*.

Holding a paper cup, a bagel wrapped in plastic,
you guess *galaxy*, your point taken,
now lost in a six-letter word for *mass of stars, gas, dust*.
My crossword clue: *collision course of spirals*.

Not one galaxy taken. Not the point.
I write *Mildromeda*. The Milky Way and Andromeda.
My crossword clue: *collision course of spirals* —
the two become one.

Mildromeda: the Milky Way and Andromeda —
a blend of fireworks, exploding stars
as two become one face of the sky
when east wind scatters remnants of last night's snow,

blends fireworks, exploding stars
which sear my skinny legs. Bound by no halo,
east wind freezes last night's snow.
Grey shelf mushrooms girdle leafless cottonwoods.

